

## **2.0**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT AND CONSEQUENCES**

This chapter describes the existing conditions in the area potentially affected by the security action, and provides an impacts analysis of the security action on those conditions. As described in Chapter 1.0, the security action includes the May 20, 1995, vehicular traffic restriction on certain portions of streets contiguous to the perimeter of the White House Complex.

The extended study area for the assessment of impacts is located entirely in the northwest quadrant of the city and is bordered to the west by 23rd Street to the east by 12th Street, to the north by M Street, and to the south by Constitution Avenue. All references to streets in this document refer to those in the northwest quadrant. See Figure 2-1 for a map of the core and extended study areas. The extended study area was developed based on the determination of the area in which significant impacts on the human environment might be caused by changes in traffic flow as a result of the security action. The actual study area for the impacts analysis for each resource is dependent on the characteristics of the particular resource being analyzed, and is described below for each resource.

Because of the emergency nature of the security action, there was no opportunity for an organized data-collection effort prior to the action. The data used for this environmental assessment reflect the fact that the assessment was initiated after the security action traffic management responses. Only a limited amount of data describing conditions before the security action were available. Data describing conditions after the security action and traffic management responses are more complete and represent conditions after the traffic management responses was implemented.

The follow-up traffic management response was implemented on June 24 and 25, 1995, in response to the action described in Section 1.3. The DCDPW, Bureau of Traffic Services, modified street operations in the vicinity in an attempt to compensate for the reduction in east-west street capacity. H Street between Pennsylvania Avenue and New York Avenue was modified from a two-way street to a one-way eastbound street. I Street between Pennsylvania Avenue and New York Avenue was modified from a one-way eastbound street to a one-way westbound street. Fifteenth Street between New York Avenue/Pennsylvania Avenue and K Street was modified from a two-way street to a one-way northbound street. The June traffic management response actions, performed by the DCDPW, were classified under NEPA as Categorical Exclusions by the FHWA.

**Figure 2-1: Study Area**

The June traffic management response included allowing public vehicular access to the portion of Pennsylvania Avenue immediately west of 15th Street to provide direct access to the Pennsylvania Avenue entrances of the Riggs National Bank and NationsBank. On-street parking in front of the banks was permitted and a temporary turnaround was created on Pennsylvania Avenue.